NATO COMMANDER

MicroProse Software

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NEWS SUMMARY (April 21-30)

UPI . . . BRUSSELS: The new NATO commander was sworn in today in a brief ceremony.

AP . . . WITTENBERGE: The East German labor movement claims that the workers in the border town of Wittenberge are on strike. Reports from West German sources indicate that large numbers of refugees are crossing the border in the vicinity. East Germany today accused the West German Government of supplying food and weapons to the striking workers.

REUTERS . . . FRANKFURT: NATO forces have been placed on Alert Level 3 and all leaves have been cancelled. Tension along the East German border has increased as a result of the West German government's recent support of the dissident East German labor movement.

REUTERS . . . MOSCOW: The USSR threatened today to crush the labor revolt by force if necessary. It warned the West German government not to interfere with the "internal affairs" of a Warsaw Pact country.

AP . . . WITTENBERGE: East German dissidents announced the beginning of talks with the West German government aimed at the reunification of the two Germanies. The West German government refuses to confirm or deny the existence of these talks.

REUTERS . . . BERLIN: All access routes to the city of Berlin have been closed by the East German Government. American and British outposts report contact with Russian mechanized forces. The Soviet government refused to acknowledge the outbreak of hostilities but noted that "appropriate measures" were being taken.

SITUATION BRIEFING (April 30)
To: Incoming NATO Commander

NATO forces in central Region consist of 24 divisions and supporting assets from the US, West German, British, Dutch, and Belgian armies. In addition a number of French divisions should become available if war breaks out. The Warsaw Pact has deployed over thirty divisions from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the USSR along the East German border. An additional fifty divisions are available from the WP strategic reserve in Poland and the USSR. Therefore the initial priority in any conflict with WP forces must be to hold back the attack until NATO reserves can be assembled and NATO air superiority can be established.

NATO Order of Battle

US V Corps: 3rd Armored and 8th Mechanized divisions. Headquartered at Frankfurt, this Corps must defend the centrally located Fulda gap and the large concentration of air assets based at Frankfurt.

US VII Corps: 1st Armored and 3rd Mechanized divisions. This Corps defends the city of Nurenberg and the US nuclear missiles near Ulm.

US Support Units: Six Surface-Air missile units, three Air Wings, two Assault Helicopter units, and two groups of Tactical nuclear missiles (Pershing).

US Reinforcements: 1st Mechanized Division, arrives May 3-4; 2nd Armored Division, May 6-7; 4th Mechanized Division, May 13-14; 2nd Marine Division, May 15; 101st Airborne Division, May 24.

West German I Corps: 3rd and 21st Panzer (Armored) Divisions; 1st, 7th, and 21st Mechanized Divisions. This Corps defends the northern approaches. (Hannover/Hamburg)

WG II Corps: 10th Panzer, 4th, 1st, and 1st Alpine Divisions. This Corps defends the southern approaches and the city of Munich.

WG III Corps: 5th and 12th Panzer Divisions; 2nd Mechanized Division. This Corps defends the central approaches.

WG Militia units: Will be called up to defend major cities if war breaks out.

WG Support units: Two air wings, three Assault helicopter units, and six SAM installations.

British I Corps: 1st, 2nd, and 4th Armored Divisions. This powerful armored force is concentrated near Hannover. The 3rd Mechanized Division (Airmobile) arrives on May 8th.

Netherlands I Corps: 1st and 4th Mechanized Divisions.

Belgian I Corps: 1st and 16th Mechanized Divisions. These small divisions are ideal for rear area defense against Soviet Airborne divisions.

These countries also contribute two air wings and four SAM sites.

The French army is not integrated into the NATO command structure but is expected to supply the 3rd, 4th, 7th and 8th Mechanized Divisions in the event of a European war.

Warsaw Pact Order of Battle

Stationed in Eastern Europe:
2nd Soviet Guards Tank Army, 6 divisions
3rd Soviet Shock Army, 3 divisions
20th Soviet Guards Army, 5 divisions
8th Soviet Guards Army, 4 divisions
1st Soviet Guards Tank Army, 4 divisions
East German 3rd Army, 3 divisions
East German 5th Army, 3 divisions
Czechoslovakian 1st Army, 3 divisions
Czechoslovakian 4th Army, 4 divisions.

WP Strategic Reserve:
5th Soviet Guards Tank Army, 12 divisions.
7th Soviet Guards Tank Army, 12 divisions.
8th Soviet Guards Tank Army, 5 divisions.
13th Soviet Mechanized Army, 4 divisions.
16th Soviet Mechanized Army, 12 divisions.
1st Polish Army, 13 divisions.
1st Hungarian Army, 6 divisions.

The strategic situation and Warsaw Pact doctrine require an all-out attack by WP forces. Soviet strategy envisions overrunning forward NATO defenses and airfields before reinforcements arrive and NATO's qualitative air superiority can be decisive. You may expect concentrated attacks all along the line. The Soviet strategic reserve may reach the front in as little as two or three days. Maximum advantage should be taken of the excellent defensive positions offered along the major rivers and forests. Air units and SAM support units should be protected. Without air superiority any prolonged defense or counterattack will be impossible. Major cities should be held for political reasons. The powerful attack strength of the helicopter units should be used to eliminate WP units which are cut off or to support a counterattack. Nuclear weapons should be used only as a last resort and must be authorized by the Commander-in-Chief.

LOADING THE GAME

DISK: Remove all cartridges, NATO COMMANDER requires 48K. Insert the game diskette in the disk drive and turn your computer on. The game will load automatically. Leave the game diskette in the disk drive while the game is playing.

TAPE: Insert the ATARI Basic cartridge. Place the program tape in the program recorder. Type CLOAD, press PLAY on the recorder, press Return again. When the computer indicates READY, enter the RUN command. Additional data is now loaded, the game will begin after a few minutes.

INTRODUCTION

NATO Commander is a complex single-player simulation in which you assume command of the NATO armies opposing a massive attack by Warsaw Pact forces. The simulation takes place in accelerated real-time. With a large number of activities taking place simultaneously including command entry, movement, combat, and status messages—the game requires your constant attention.

SCENARIOS

SURPRISE ATTACK: In this scenario the Warsaw Pact launches a surprise strike against the unsuspecting NATO forces. The NATO player must delay the attackers and inflict maximum casualties. Political Points are ignored in this scenario. Only the Northern half of the map is used and the NATO forces begin in dispersed positions.

HANNOVER/HAMBURG: This scenario uses only the Northern half of the map. Warsaw Pact forces attempt to overrun the NATO defenders and capture these two key cities.

PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE: The NATO player takes the initiative and attacks the Warsaw Pact armies. This scenario gives the NATO player an opportunity for offensive tactics.

THE ITALIAN OPTION: Warsaw Pact forces attack along the German front but offer peace to the Italians. Political points are doubled as they are required to persuade the Italians to join the battle.

THE BATTLE OF GERMANY: This scenario includes the entire WP assault on Germany and ends only with the withdrawal of either the WP or NATO forces.

You may select from one of four difficulty levels for each scenario.

Your armies may be organized into divisions (larger units) or brigades (smaller units). Divisions are more powerful and easier to manage, brigades give you more tactical flexibility.

COMMANDS

Commands are entered via the joystick or by depressing the key indicated in parenthesis ( ). It is not necessary to depress RETURN.

CURSOR CONTROL: The flashing cursor is used to designate which unit you wish to communicate with. The joystick may be used to move the cursor. The cursor may also be moved up/down/left/right using the standard keys. If the CTRL key is not depressed the cursor will move in single steps. If CTRL is depressed the cursor will take larger steps. The map will scroll when the cursor reaches the edge of the screen.

UNIT STATUS: (Trigger or Space) This command displays the status of the unit under the cursor. Included are Unit ID, Strength, Supply Level, Defense Mode, Morale, and other status information.

MOVE: (M) Commands the unit to move to a new location. After entering the MOVE command, move the cursor to the new location. Then use the HERE command.

ATTACK: (A) Commands the unit to attack an enemy unit. Ground units may only attack adjacent units. Helicopter units may attack anywhere on the map. Designate the unit to be attacked using the HERE command.

HERE: (H) Used to designate the destination of a MOVE or ATTACK command. If an attack is being ordered you will be asked to select an accelerated attack, normal attack, or chemical attack using the yellow function keys.

CANCEL: (X) Cancel any outstanding movement or attack orders for the designated unit.

ORDERS: (O) Used to give special orders to Air or Nuclear units. Air units may be ordered to begin Air Superiority, Ground Support, or Reconnaisance missions. Nuclear units may be commanded to authorize, launch, or cancel nuclear strikes.

TERRAIN: (T) This command removes the units from the display, allowing you to see the terrain under those units. Enter T again to restore the display.

FREEZE: (F) Stops the game action while allowing commands to be entered. Enter F again to resume the action.

GENERAL STATUS: (G) Displays the current situation including casualties, WP penetration level, Political Points, Combat Points and total Victory Points.

AIR STATUS: (Q) Displays the basic air war status information.

WHO?: (W) Positions the cursor over the source of the previous radio message unless the message was from a surrendering unit.

SAVE: (S) Saves the current game situation in a disk file. Enter a file name from 1 to 8 characters. The .SCN suffix is added automatically.

LOAD: (L) Loads a previously saved situation from the disk. Enter the file name as in SAVE. Once the file is loaded, use the "T" command to continue the game.

UNIT TYPES

American, British, and French units are blue. West German units are black. Dutch and Belgian units are green. All Warsaw Pact units are Red.
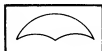
Mechanized Infantry: the backbone of every army. Better on defense than attacking.

Armor: Fast moving and hard hitting.

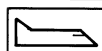Armored Cavalry: Mobile reconnaisance units.

Airborne: used mainly to attack lightly defended rear area installations. (WP only)
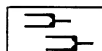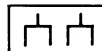
Militia: best suited for fixed defense.

Helicopters: used to eliminate surrounded or weakened units.

Air Wings:

Surface-to-Air Missiles:

Tactical Nuclear Missiles:

BASIC CONCEPTS

This simulation is designed to allow the player to concentrate on the tactical and strategic aspects of the situation without requiring an understanding of the mechanics underlying the game. For this reason each unit has its own built in intelligence. For example, units will automatically enter the Tactical mode and choose their own path from their current location to the location assigned by the MOVE/HERE command sequence. In doing so they will endeavor to avoid enemy units and difficult terrain. As soon as the destination is reached, the unit will begin to prepare a defensive position. Units which are attacked in overwhelming strength will attempt to retreat without being ordered to do so.

MODES
A unit may assume one of four modes. In Prepared Defense mode the unit is dug in a defensive posture. In Tactical mode the unit is in a mobile posture. A unit may only move and attack if it is in Tactical mode. The Hasty Defense and Defense modes are used during the transition from Tactical to Prepared Defense modes. Units automatically enter the Tactical mode when ordered to move or when routed.

MOVEMENT
Units will move in accordance with the movement commands. Units move more rapidly over road and clear terrain than river and forested areas. Units which are fresh will move more readily than broken and routed units. A unit cannot move through another unit.

COMBAT
A large number of factors affect the results of combat. Tanks are more suited to attacking, infantry are better on defense. Attacking units must be in Tactical mode. Defending units are strongest in Prepared Defense mode. River and hilly terrain are particularly suited to defense, forests and cities are also good. Combat is also affected by the amount of air power assigned to ground support. Most engagements are not resolved with a single round of combat: combat continues until one unit is broken or routed and retreats or is eliminated. Heavy casualties may be sustained by these broken or routed units. Three varieties of combat are possible. In accelerated combat the attacker accepts additional casualties in order to put maximum pressure on the defender. A chemical attack reduces the effectiveness of the infantry components involved while leaving the tanks at full strength. There is a political point penalty for the use of chemical weapons by NATO forces.

MORALE
Morale levels are Fresh, Pressured, Tired, Broken, and Routed. Both combat and movement are hindered by low morale levels. Units will gradually recover their morale if left undisturbed.

AIR OPERATIONS
Air Wings may be assigned one of three missions. Air Superiority orders the wing to engage and defeat the WP air units directly. This is the most effective method of reducing the strength of the WP air forces. Air Wings on Ground Support missions assist ground units in both defensive and offensive combat. Air Wings on Reconaisance missions may discover location of WP units which are not in combat with NATO forces. (The location of these units is not normally known to the NATO

commanders except at the very beginning of the game.) Surface-to-Air missile (SAM) units contribute to the attrition of the WP air forces. The usual NATO strategy is to weaken the WP air forces early in the game by assigning Air Superiority missions. Once the WP forces are weakened, Ground Support missions are then assigned to turn the tide of ground battle.

NUCLEAR OPERATIONS

Nuclear strikes must be authorized by the Commander-in-Chief. Such authorization will not be given unless the battlefield situation is serious or nuclear weapons have already been used by WP forces. There is also a political point penalty for using nuclear weapons. Only one nuclear strike request may be outstanding at a time. Generally a number of hours will transpire between targeting a strike and its execution.

VICTORY POINTS

Victory Points are a measure of how successfully (or unsuccessfully) you are conducting the campaign. Victory points may be Political or Combat points. Political points represent general world opinion as to the progress of the battle and are gained by capturing cities, political points are lost by losing cities and using nuclear or chemical weapons. Combat points reflect the battle situation and are gained by inflicting casualties on the enemy, combat points are lost by allowing the enemy to penetrate into your territory. At various points in the game certain political events take place. These may be beneficial to the NATO countries (A strike in Poland) or detrimental (The surrender of Finland). The accumulation of these events will eventually cause either the NATO or WP alliances to crumble, ending the game.

TACTICAL TIPS

The simulation requires a sound overall defensive strategy, although offensive opportunities will develope as the NATO air forces provide ground support and the WP attack loses its momentum.

Position your defensive units to take advantage of the terrain, river lines and mountains are best. Defending units should be positioned to support each other, don't allow many WP units to gang up on a single NATO unit.

Make sure your units have time to take up prepared defense positions. Avoid encountering WP units while moving in tactical mode.

Use massed helicopter attacks to eliminate WP units which threaten vital rear area installations, Air Wings, Nuclear Weapons, etc.

Don't ignore the Air Forces, they can turn the tide of the battle. Wear the enemy down with Air Superiority missions and then use Ground Support.

Note that helicopters, SAM missiles, Air Wings, and Nuclear missiles cannot move: they must be protected.

Don't be reluctant to FREEZE the action to study the situation and plan your strategy.

Move your reserve and replacement units into the battle as soon as possible. Try to maintain a backup defensive line behind your main defenses.

Use your imagination. The possibilities are endless. Use the SAVE and LOAD functions to try different strategic variations.